

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,
Broadcasters have free use of public airwaves for their own profit. It is only fair and very little to ask that in exchange for that free use, they act in the public interest for at least part of their programming.

Today it is sensational, partisan and commercial rule the public airwaves. As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming today.

Where is the local public affairs programming? It is virtually non-existent, constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. If Americans don't have access to the basic facts about the candidates or the issues, our democracy is at risk - as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest the FCC; they have no incentive to do so. It's up to the FCC to define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

Please, as the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us. It is only right. And it is up to you.

Sincerely,

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